

Message Text

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 DHA-02 AID-05 CIEP-01

TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 MCT-01 DIWY-01 /100 W

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SUBJECT: SOME SIGNIFICANT DECISIONS AT THE TUC CONFERENCE

REF: LONDON 14183

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION OF THE
TUC CONGRESS IN BRIGHTON, SEPTEMBER 6 - 10, WAS ITS OVER-
WHELMING SUPPORT OF THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, EVEN THOUGH THE
SEAMEN'S STRIKE CALL --- UNTIL ITS ELEVENTH HOUR POST-

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PONEMENT EARLY SATURDAY MORNING -- WOULD HAVE CERTAINLY

UNDERMINED THIS DECISION, PERHAPS IRREPARABLY. (SEE REFTEL FOR REPORT OF DEBATE ON SOCIAL CONTRACT.) THE CONGRESS ALSO VEHEMENTLY EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN AT THE RISING LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND GOVERNMENT'S PLANS TO CUT PUBLIC EXPENDITURES. BUT THE CONGRESS ALSO DEALT WITH MANY MORE QUESTIONS -- AN ENORMOUS VARIETY OF THEM RANGING FROM THE MUNDANE BUT IMPORTANT PROBLEM OF OCCUPATIONAL NOISE TO THE MORE EMOTIVE ISSUES SUCH AS RACIALISM AND DEVOLUTION. A FEW OF THESE OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONGRESS DISCUSSIONS ARE DESCRIBED IN THIS MESSAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. RACIALISM - RISING RACIAL TENSIONS IN BRITAIN, REFLECTED IN THE EXPLOSIVE RIOT RECENTLY IN LONDON'S NOTTING HILL AREA AND IN OTHER INCIDENTS, TOGETHER WITH THE EXPLOITATION OF RACIAL HATRED BY EXTREMIST GROUPS, HAVE SHOCKED THE UNIONS -- AND THE LABOR PARTY -- OUT OF THEIR RELATIVE COMPLACENCY ON THE SUBJECT. THE TUC CONGRESS UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED A JOINT NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN WITH THE LABOR PARTY WHICH WOULD INVOLVE MASS MEETINGS, DEMONSTRATION AND INFORMATION ACTIVITY. THE CONGRESS LINKED THE GROWTH OF RACIALISM WITH THE RISE OF FASCIST ACTIVITY IN THE UK AND THE SUPPORT OBTAINED BY RACIALIST GROUPS IN RECENT PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL ELECTIONS."

2. THE TUC HAS HAD A LONG RECORD OF OPPOSITION TO RACIALISM WHICH DAVID BASNETT TERMED "THE NEW PORNOGRAPHY", BUT IT WAS ONLY IN DECEMBER 1975 THAT IT FORMALLY SET UP A RACE RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AND THERE HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY FEW BLACK OR BROWN FACES AT TUC CONGRESSES, A FACT NOTED BY MORE THAN ONE DELEGATE, INCLUDING LOUIS MAHONEY OF BRITISH EQUITY, WHO SAID HE WAS THE ONLY BLACK DELEGATE AT THE CONGRESS AND WHO WARNED: "BRITAIN IS A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY. THIS FACT MUST BE RECOGNIZED OR WE WILL BE PUTTING THE FUTURE IN JEOPARDY FOR OUR CHILDREN."

3. INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY - THE TUC IS ON RECORD FAVORING A SYSTEM OF WORKER'S PARTICIPATION IN INDUSTRY WHICH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD BE BASED ON 50 PERCENT REPRESENTATION OF WORKERS ON THE SUPERVISORY BOARD OF COMPANIES, WITH THESE REPRESENTATIVES TO BE SELECTED BY THE TRADE UNIONS. (THE BULLOCK COMMITTEE'S ENQUIRY INTO INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS EXPECTED TO REPORT BY THE END OF THE YEAR AND THE TUC IS LOOKING TO SEE LEGISLATION ON THE SUBJECT IN THE 1976-77 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT. WE BELIEVE THIS TIMETABLE IS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC.)

4. NONETHELESS AS THE DISCUSSION AT THE CONGRESS
DEMONSTRATED, THERE ARE STILL MISGIVINGS AND EVEN DOWN-
RIGHT OPPOSITION TO THE TUC'S FORMULA OF "WORKERS ON THE
BOARD" AMONG UNIONS IN THE TUC. IN THE END, CONGRESS
REITERATED ITS SUPPORT IN A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR
"WORKERS PARTICIPATION THROUGH THEIR TRADE UNIONS AT ALL
LEVELS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INDUSTRIES". AND REJECTED
AMENDMENTS BY THE ENGINEERS AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS' UNIONS
WHICH WOULD WEAKEN THE TUC FORMULA.

5. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS - OF THE VERY FEW RESOLUTIONS
ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AT THIS CONGRESS, ONE DENOUNCED

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THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE "RECENT BRUTAL AND REPRESSIVE MEASURES" IT TOOK AGAINST BLACK AND COLORED COMMUNITIES. IT URGED AN END TO ALL NEW BRITISH INVESTMENTS IN THAT COUNTRY. AN EMBARGO ON MILITARY AID AND PRESSURE ON BRITISH CONCERNS IN SOUTH AFRICA TO RECOGNIZE BLACK UNIONS. ANOTHER RESOLUTION CONDEMNED "THE MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ARGENTINIAN POLITICAL LIFE" AND THE VIOLATION OF TRADE UNIONS RIGHTS IN THAT COUNTRY. STILL
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ANOTHER DECLARED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE "BETTER LIFE FOR ALL" CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN IRELAND, WHILE SEVERAL DELEGATES INCLUDING ANDY BARR, THE TRADE UNION LEADER FROM BELFAST. DENOUNCED THE SECTARIAN BLOODSHED AND VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND, GAVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE WOMEN'S PEACE MARCHES THROUGHOUT IRELAND, AND CALLED FOR A GUARANTEE OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ALL. OTHER RESOLUTIONS SUPPORTED AID TO UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND EC REFORMS.

6. THE TUC CONTINUES TO BE CONCERNED WITH SPECIFIC AREAS AROUND THE WORLD WHERE IN ITS VIEW THERE ARE OPPRESSIVE REGIMES OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER -- SUCH AS IN SOUTH AFRICA, ARGENTINA, CHILE, AND WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ICFTU AND THE ILO IN WHICH IT PARTICIPATES. IT ALSO IS INTERESTED IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE THIS PAST YEAR IT SENT DELEGATIONS -- TO SYRIA AND TO ISRAEL -- AND AT THIS CONGRESS JACK JONES OFFERED THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE TUC TO DEVELOP CONTACTS BETWEEN ISRAELI AND ARAB TRADE UNIONS. BUT, JUDGING FROM THE EMPHASIS GIVEN IN THE GENERAL COUNCIL'S REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND IN JACK JONES' SPEECH TO THE CONGRESS, THE TUC'S INCREASING PREOCCUPATION IS WITH EUROPEAN PROBLEMS. EVEN THOUGH IT IS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (JONES DECLARED THE EC EMPHASIZED THE TRIVIAL, WASTED TIME, AND WAS LESS THAN HELPFUL ON VITAL ISSUES SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND ROAD TRANSPORT), IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TUC NOW VIEWS ITS OWN VITAL INTERESTS MAINLY WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC). JONES ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE TUC WOULD BE SENDING A DELEGATION TO SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IN NOVEMBER. AS FOR RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE. THE TUC CONGRESS

REITERATED ITS DECISION AT LAST YEAR'S CONGRESS THAT THE TUC SHOULD TRY TO BRING THE ICFTU AND THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WFTU CLOSER TOGETHER AND APPROVED THE DECISION OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL TO SEND DELEGATIONS RECENTLY TO EAST GERMANY, BULGARIA AND YUGOSLAVIA. (THE GENERAL COUNCIL'S REPORT NOTED THAT THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HAS AGREED WITH THE TUC'S "PRAGMATIC STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH" IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN TRADE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNIONS. THE TUC ALSO PLANS TO PARTICIPATE IN A SECOND ALL-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFERENCE IN GENEVA EARLY NEXT YEAR.)

7. DEVOLUTION - THE TUC CONGRESS, IN ONE OF ITS RARE POLLS OF INDIVIDUAL DELEGATES, OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT ON DEVOLUTION WHICH BROADLY SUPPORTS THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION. THE VOTE WAS 8,761,000 FOR THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL'S REPORT TO 711,000 AGAINST. A RESOLUTION WHICH OPPOSED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS AND WHICH DEMANDED INSTEAD A REFERENDUM OF THE SCOTTISH AND WELSH PEOPLES WAS DEFEATED. IN OPENING THE DEBATE, LORD ALLEN, THE SHOPWORKERS LEADER, SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVOLUTION POLICY WAS A "SENSIBLE AND DESIRABLE DECENTRALIZATION OF A RANGE OF GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS TO NEW DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS REFLECTING THE CULTURE, TRADITIONS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE SCOTTISH AND WELSH PEOPLE IN THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC POLICY AND SOCIAL UNITY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM." LORD ALLEN, SAID THE GENERAL COUNCIL, VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED A REFERENDUM WHICH WOULD RESULT IN CHAOS IF DIFFERENT VERDICTS WERE GIVEN BY DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE UK. A SUPPORTER OF THE AMENDMENT, GEORGE SMITH, THE LEADER OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, CHARGED THAT THE LABOR PARTY HAD BEEN PANICKED INTO ACCEPTING UNACCEPTABLE DEMANDS: "IF THE DEVOLUTION BILL IS PASSED DURING THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION THERE WILL BE NOT ONLY FRUSTRATION WITHIN THE SCOTTISH ASSEMBLY BUT ALSO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNMENT...THE INEVITABLE RESULT BEING OVERWHELMING DEMANDS FOR SEPARATION." (THE OVERWHELMING TUC SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN SIMILAR SUPPORT BY THE TRADE UNION VOTES AT THE LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE LATER THIS MONTH.)

8. OTHER ISSUES - THESE WERE SOME OF THE KEY DISCUSSIONS

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AT THE TUC CONGRESS WHICH REFLECT THE BROAD RANGE OF
TRADE UNION CONCERNS -- IN ADDITION TO THE CENTRAL
QUESTION OF THE ECONOMY WHICH WAS REPORTED IN REFTEL. BUT
THERE WERE STILL FURTHER ISSUES -- MANY OF THEM ALSO OF
SIGNIFICANCE -- ON WHICH THE CONGRESS PASSED JUDGEMENT.
FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONGRESS REITERATED ITS LONGSTANDING
SUPPORT OF THE EXTENSION OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP,
SPECIFYING IN PARTICULAR THE BANKS AND KEY FINANCIAL
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INSTITUTIONS; IN SO DOING, IT ADDED SUPPORT TO DETAILED PROPOSALS ALONG THESE LINES RECENTLY PUT FORWARD BY THE LABOR PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. OTHER CONGRESS DECISIONS CALLED FOR CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT IN TRAINING SCHEMES FOR YOUNG WORKERS, IMPROVED PENSION SCHEMES AND REDUCTION IN THE RETIREMENT AGE. THE CONGRESS ALSO DEALT WITH ENERGY ISSUES AND, AMONG ITS PROPOSALS IN THIS FIELD, CALLED FOR GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF ALL OFFSHORE ENERGY RESOURCES. ON EQUAL PAY, IT URGED AMENDMENTS TO CURRENT LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD IMPROVE WOMEN'S CLAIMS FOR EQUAL PAY. ON DEALING WITH THE HEALTH SERVICES, THE CONGRESS URGED PARLIAMENT TO ENACT STIFFER LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THE SPEEDY REMOVAL OF ALL PAY BEDS FROM THE NHS. (COPIES OF THESE AND OTHER DECISIONS OF THE CONGRESS WILL BE TRANSMITTED BY POUCH. A GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONGRESS WILL BE MADE IN SEPTTEL.)

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